
**Children & Family Services
Committee**

HB 2002

Brief Description: Authorizing limited continuing foster care and support services up to age twenty-one.

Sponsors: Representatives Dickerson, Roberts, Kagi, Kenney and Santos.

<p>Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extends foster care or group care to certain youth until the youth turns 21 years of age.

Hearing Date: 1/16/06

Staff: Sonja Hallum (786-7092).

Background:

If there are allegations of abandonment, abuse or neglect, or no parent who is capable of caring for a child, the State may investigate the allegations and initiate a dependency proceeding in juvenile court. If the court finds the statutory requirements have been met, the court will find the child to be a dependent of the State.

Whenever the court finds a child to be a dependent child, the court will enter a dispositional plan for the case which will include an order for the placement of the child either within the home or outside of the home. If the child is placed outside the home, he or she may be placed with a relative or in non-relative foster care.

A child may remain in foster care until the age of 18. However, a youth may be permitted to remain in foster care or group care through age 20 to enable the youth to complete his or her high school or vocational school program.

Summary of Bill:

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is granted authority to allow a youth reaching 18 years of age to continue in foster care or group care as needed to participate in or complete a high school or post-high school academic or vocational program, and to receive necessary support and transition services. A youth who remains eligible for such placement and services pursuant to DSHS rules may continue in foster care or group care until the youth reaches his or her 21st birthday.

The bill states that nothing in the bill should be construed as creating any of the following:

1. an entitlement to services;
2. judicial authority to extend the jurisdiction of Juvenile Court under a dependency proceeding to a youth who has turned 18 years of age or to order the provision of services to the youth;
or
3. a private right of action or claim on the part of any individual, entity, or agency against the DSHS or any contractor of the DSHS.

The bill also authorizes the DSHS to adopt rules establishing eligibility for independent living services and placement for youths pursuant to the bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.